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SUBJECT: UNESCO: PLANS TO PROMOTE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF
CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONVENTION TAKE SHAPE

1. SUMMARY. The UNESCO Secretariat plans vigorously to promote quick ratification of the Cultural Diversity Convention, especially in Africa, following its presumed adoption at the October 2005 UNESCO General Conference. In apparent concert with these efforts, the G-77 plans additional regional cultural conferences, likely to focus on ratification of the Cultural Diversity Convention. Following entry into force, regulations shaping Convention's implementation over the long term could be quickly formed. END SUMMARY.

UNESCO Plans to Promote the Convention

2. The proposed UNESCO core budget allocates over USD two million for promotion of the entry into force of the Cultural Diversity and Intangible Heritage Conventions.

3. A UNESCO Culture official explained to poloff 28 September that these monies would help fund regional meetings to form coalitions of support for the Cultural Diversity Convention and draft materials in various languages explaining the contents of the Cultural Diversity Convention and urging its implementation. This official stressed that UNESCO's promotion of the Cultural Diversity Convention (see UNESCO budget proposal, pages 173-174) would follow the same lines as its advocacy of the Intangible Heritage Convention.

4. A different UNESCO culture official outlined at a 27 September lunch additional UNESCO Secretariat travel plans that will include promotion of the Cultural Diversity Convention.

--UNESCO culture sector officials will attend a November 2005 Dakar conference, sponsored by the International Network of Culture Professionals (INCP). The UNESCO official noted that former Canadian Culture Minister Sheila Copps was one of the first to advocate a different legal/trade regime for "cultural goods and services" and had founded INCP. She said that a UNESCO official had attended the annual INCP conference every year since 1998. Travel costs would not come from UNESCO core culture budget, she said, but evaded answering poloff's question about how the trip would be financed.

--A December 15-17 Culture Ministers' conference in Nairobi, which is part of UNESCO's regular program of support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

--A January 23-24 2006 summit of African heads of state in Khartoum, which will focus on culture. There is some hope that UNESCO D-G Matsuura will attend this conference.

G-77 Regional Conferences

5. Costa Rica's UNESCO Ambassador Monteil, the head of the G-77, described G-77 plans to form a UNESCO "South-South" Culture Forum, which would include meetings focused on gathering support for ratification of the Cultural Diversity Convention. A large meeting was tentatively planned for June 2006, he said. He intimated that UNESCO would assist in the planning and funding for the meeting, but declined to provide specifics.

Some EU countries apparently not yet focused on ratification

6. UNESCO-based reps of some EU countries report that strategic planning for obtaining ratification in the

national legislatures has not proceeded past initial planning. By and large, these reps report that certain interest groups in their countries vigorously support the idea of the Convention, but that there are no concrete steps to obtain ratification.

What happens after the Convention enters into force?

[17](#). Thirty ratifications are necessary for entry into force, after which an 18-nation Intergovernmental Committee would be elected, with a term of four years. (Article 29)

[17](#). This 18-nation Intergovernmental Committee will draw up operational guidelines and establish other important precedents for the implementation of the Convention. (Article 23)

Comment

[18](#). The idea might be to get ratifications in one or two European countries, with developing countries, especially in Africa, making up the rest. Under this scenario, one or two leading countries could easily exercise a disproportionate influence in drafting the precedent-setting operational guidelines.

Oliver